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Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe 1350-1550: Packaging, Presentation and Consumption, ed. Emma Cayley and Susan Powell, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2013, 352 p. ISBN 978-0-85989-870-6

1 This book is, in many ways, much more than the sum of its parts. It is divided into three sections tacking Packaging and Presentation, Consumers, Producers, Owners and Readers, and Writing Consumption. Some of the essays in the first section sometimes feel like rather a dry read when tackled alone but read as part of the volume they show how attention to aspects of book culture often overlooked, such as bindings, rulings, or text order, can add to our understanding of the way in which manuscripts not only functioned, but came to exist in particular formats. In fact, the idea of the book as 'material artefact', as the editors note (p. xiii), is at the heart of new research into the lives and afterlives of medieval and early modern books. Thus Anne Marie Lane's article 'How can we Recognise 'Contemporary' Bookbindings of the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries?' takes as its starting point Mirjam Foot's observation that 'the history of bookbinding actually intersects with many different areas of study: religion, art, patronage, collecting, market forces, readership, book production and the booktrade' (p. 3). Using this framework she brings a curator's approach to the problems of analysing and identifying bookbindings. The article draws on a project at the Toppan Library at the University of Wyoming to identify original fifteenth- and sixteenth-century bindings in pre-1550 books. Using these examples, the author tackles a series

of features to look for and the issues that these raise when trying to identify contemporary bindings. These include problems caused by later bindings, covering materials, structural aspects and condition. Attention is given, for example, to the different leathers used to cover books, how to identify them, and how they evolve over time. For instance, she notes that 'sheep is the cheapest animal binding because it is so soft and porous [...] that it easily erodes and peels' as on all the examples she has considered (p. 8). Drawing conclusions from the Toppan Library survey, she notes that of a total of eighty-eight books, 'only twenty-three are still in their Gothic or Renaissance bindings' and that the eighteenth to nineteenth century appears to be the period in which most of the books were rebound (p. 12). Lane concludes that while contemporary bindings, although often in a poor state, can teach us much about the life and making of a book, later rebindings, although not necessarily desirable from a historical point of view, have nevertheless served to preserve books that might otherwise have disappeared (p. 12-13).

2 Matti Peikola's article 'Guidelines for Consumption: Scribal Ruling Patterns and Designing the *Mise-en-Page* in Later Medieval England' analyses the layout used by English scribes in Middle English (mainly) religious prose texts to 'increase our understanding of scribal presentation strategies intended for different contexts of consumption' (p. 14-15). The article first considers the purposes of ruling – functional and aesthetic – and then moves on to consider the various constraints that could affect scribal design and layout. These constraints could include scribal economics, the scribe's expertise or professionalism, personal preferences and influences, the layout of the exemplar, the subject and the language of the text. For instance, the author notes that 'copying a text in double columns was in general more demanding for the scribe' and that the 'adoption of a single-column layout might therefore sometimes suggest a scribe's lack of expertise' (p. 23). In terms of genre, Peikola suggests that the single-column ruling used for examples of the Pore Caitif 'is likely to reflect its producers' perception of the text primarily as a representative of catechetical and devotional writing' in contrast to the Wycliffite New Testaments which were 'ruled in double columns and perceived as belonging to the biblical or liturgical genre' (p. 25). The author concludes that whereas 'most decisions concerning ruling were made *in situ* by scribes at the producing end, they essentially anticipate different forms of consumption of the manuscript book, as both text and artefact' (p. 31).

3 In 'The Order of the Lays in the "Odd" Machaut Manuscript, BnF, fr. 9221 (E)', Kate Maxwell analyses the ordering of Guillaume de Machaut's lays in one of the manuscripts that contains his complete works, exploring the notion that 'the packaging of Machaut's oeuvre was on a similar scale of importance to medieval patrons and readers [...] as the works themselves' (p. 32-33). Traditionally considered 'odd' because it bears no direct relation to any of the other complete text manuscripts, BnF, fr. 9221 (referred to as E) is nevertheless a work of 'scribal virtuosity' in which the '*mise-en-page* of each work was scrupulously planned' (p. 33). Maxwell considers in some detail the way in which the lays interact with the miniatures that accompany them. For instance, she notes that although this manuscript, like all the others, begins with the lay 'Loyauté', '[i]n E alone does the stark singularity of the poetic voice contrast with the plurality of the miniature: we may choose to read and hear the lays [...] as the work of an individual, whereas the miniatures reminds us of the collective nature of making music and indeed manuscripts' (p. 40). Here, as with other examples discussed (and in

other articles), it would have been helpful to have reproduced some of these miniatures and page layouts. By highlighting the 'internal unity' of the lays in this manuscript, Maxwell concludes that it should not be seen as the odd-one-out but rather as a 'carefully presented and finely constructed work of art' (p. 47).

4 The miniature programmes in two copies of Lydgate's *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund* are the subject of Sonja Drimmer's article 'Picturing the King or Picturing the Saint'. The two manuscripts under consideration are London, BL, MS Harley 2278, the dedication copy made for Henry VI (c. 1434-39), and London, BL, Yates Thompson 47, made for an East Anglian family in the 1460s. Although the latter manuscript has been described as much cruder than the royal copy, Drimmer notes that 'the close associations between the two copies [...] indicate that, far from originating in technical inequality, their differences in execution are due to the circumstances of their commissions' (p. 48) and that 'the illuminators modelled their manuscripts on two very difference paradigms, each suggested by the poem itself: the prince's mirror, and the saint's relic' (p. 49). The Harley manuscript was commissioned by Abbot William Curteys of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds to celebrate the twelve-year- old Henry VI's visit to the Abbey in 1434. In the *Lives*, Drimmer notes, Lydgate 'advocate[s], both implicitly and explicitly, Henry VI's legitimacy' as well as 'prais[ing] a monarch's respect for monastic self-determination' (p. 51). The illustrative cycle is designed, she argues, to encourage 'Henry to envision himself as Edmund and to match both the monarchic and saintly ideals he embodies' (p. 52). For instance, the second frontispiece showing Edmund's Standard of three crowns, which also happens to be the arms of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, alludes 'to imagery that was central to Lancastrian propaganda during the king's minority, including twin crowns' (p. 54). By contrast, the Yates Thompson copy was made for an entirely different audience, possibly Elizabeth Fitzwalter of Attleborough. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, this copy rejects 'the earlier manuscript's royal-political agenda' with the merging of Henry VI and St Edmund absent, 'not through emendation of Lydgate's text but rather through the manipulation of its order and illustration' (p. 57). For instance, the Harley frontispieces showing Edmund's standard full-page have here been converted to shields at the foot of the page, assimilating them 'to marks of ownership' (p. 57). As such Drimmer suggests that 'this is not merely a book *about* Edmund but [...] it is also a book *of* Edmund', becoming in a sense, 'a reliquary, the flesh of its folios proxying the body of the saint whose story they relate' (p. 57). Further comparison of the two illustrative cycles follows in the wake of this discussion and the author concludes that 'the naturalism of the Harley and the supernaturalism of its later counterpart direct their respective readers to evaluate their own position in relation to St Edmund' (p. 67).

5 The last essay in this first section on Packaging and Presentation, Yvonne Rode's 'Sixty-three Gallons of Books: Shipping Books to London in the Late Middle Ages', considers a different kind of 'packaging' – 'the types of books imported and the containers in which they arrived in London' (p. 68). Highlighting the shortcomings of previous work on the importation of books that has looked at bibliographic studies, wills and inventories and customs accounts, Rode's study explores 'a larger collection of customs accounts for London [...] to illuminate parts of the business side of the book trade overlooked by recent scholarship' (p. 69). She first considers the place of book imports in customs accounts and notes that there are nine surviving accounts that contain book imports in the period 1480-1540 (p. 73). Rode then considers the changes in how books were shipped, from mainly chests in the 1480s to baskets in the 1530s, and interestingly

notes that books were often shipped in containers of mixed goods, including cloth and religious items (p. 74-75). The descriptions given of books in the accounts is also discussed. Although specific titles are not recorded, the types of books are noted, such as *libris impressis*, *libris*, *diverse histories*, and *bokes* and Rode discusses the possible meanings of these terms suggesting that '[f]urther research into printing on vellum and paper [...] along with related information from booksellers' accounts [...] could help clarify if there are any real differences between the various classifications found in the accounts' (p. 79). In conclusion, she notes in particular that 'English demand for books was supplied by continental Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries' and that a group of importers emerged who specialised in the importation of books alone (p. 80). The essays is complemented by several tables and an appendix with details of the accounts consulted.

6 The second part of the book, 'Consumers: Producers, Owners, and Readers', opens with Anna Lewis's article, 'But solid food is for the mature, who...have their senses trained to discern good and evil': John Colop's Book and the Spiritual Diet of the Discerning Lay Londoner'. The study considers how a mid-fifteenth century religious anthology now in Cambridge University Library and belonging to the London merchant John Colop. The volume was produced as part of a book-sharing scheme which allowed a 'safe [...] place for the reading of difficult or dangerous religious material' (p. 86) at a time when the rise of movements like Lollardy and Free Spiritism threatened orthodox religion. Lewis argues, however, that Colop's book 'reveals recurring instances of warnings of the dangers of singularity' and 'an equally insistent focus on the need to counter the urge to individualism' (p. 88). The texts, surveyed here, include *The Holi Prophete David Seith*, written by a Lollard and incorporating a sermon by Bernard of Clairvaux on proper learning. Lewis suggests that the contents of the book demonstrate 'a definition of a "right", [...] "safe", way of knowing, of growing as a Christian' (p. 91) and of consuming texts. The fact that this 'common-profit' book circulated amongst a community of elite readers but was 'never actually owned by any one person' means that 'the book dissociates itself from the dangers of privacy and the creation of secret or "singular" readings' (p. 94).

7 John Colop reappears in Anne F. Sutton's contribution, entitled 'The Acquisition and Disposal of Books for Worship and Pleasure by Mercers of London in the Later Middle Ages'. Whereas 'skills of all mercers with account books and business papers' have already been considered by scholars, Sutton sets out to describe 'the books they acquired for devotion and pleasure' (p. 95). Mercers, like Colop, were relatively well educated and the wealthiest 'had access not only to the latest religious debate but also to the best of contemporary literature and books' (p. 96). Sutton suggests that mercers bequeathed books both during their lifetime and in their wills for common profit and for the 'spiritual welfare of the community', aiding priests who could not afford books, for instance (p. 97). The author briefly summarises the content of wills of mercers proved from 1259 until 1536 but somewhat frustratingly concludes that 'statistics concerning books in will cannot be precise and are rarely of any real use' (p. 100). She then considers bequests made for clergy and churches, which included, not surprisingly, books to be used during the mass but also copies of the legenda, 'the compilation of readings and lessons [...] used in church services' (p. 101). Books designed for daily, personal, use including portiforiums and Books of Hours were bequeathed to the clergy but also to close family members (p. 102-103). In the section 'Mercers who loved books' Sutton discusses the education and means of various

mercers who acquired and passed on books to their family members. In the final section she also details mercers' apparent interest in history and literature: Roger Thorney, for instance, 'finance[d] Wynkyn de Worde's 1495 edition of Caxton's first book, the encyclopaedia of Bartholomew Anglicus [...] as well as the 1495 edition of Caxton's 1482 *Polychronicon*' (p. 113). Sutton concludes that mercers also owned 'frivolous' books, including Gower's *Confessio amantis* and Hoccleve's poems, which they were seemingly careful not to mention in their wills, perhaps because mercers remained, into the sixteenth century, 'passionately involved in religious debate and [...] became key figures in the import and spreading of the new religion and its books' (p. 134).

8 Martha W. Driver's article, 'Women and Book Production in the Early Tudor Period' 'examines named women engaged in printing or publishing books [...] – several of them working in Paris and Antwerp – during a period when printing and publishing became political acts' (p. 114). She focuses in particular on Elizabeth Pickering, who, like many widows in France and England, carried on their husband's printing business, although Driver also suggests that Elizabeth may have been printing in her own right before her husband's death (p. 117). As Driver shows, the way Elizabeth styled herself in the colophons varied – as 'late wife' or 'widow' of Robert Redman, or as Elizabeth Pickering – suggesting multiple identities and an 'emerging sense of self' (p. 119). The books she issued were 'fairly conservative' and she refrained from reissuing 'any of the books printed by her husband that might have been deemed controversial in 1540', such as the New Testament in English. By contrast, the books issuing from the press of Catherine van Ruremund in Antwerp and exported to London 'were more radical', suggesting 'a personal interest in reform along with a well-honed business sense of just what might sell in London' (p. 119). Although brief, this article is an interesting case study that sheds light on one aspect of women's business activity that is well-known but relatively little-discussed.

9 The Roxburgh Club, a group of wealthy bibliophiles founded in 1812, is the subject of Shayne Husbands' essay 'Consumption, Obsession and the Passion for Print'. The members 'were in love with typography and the early technology of the printing press' (p. 121). However, their 'fascination with both consuming and reproducing the works that had caught their imagination did not come [...] without an unanticipated social price' (p. 123). For instance, in 1809, bibliomania 'had already been declared a mental disorder' and the Club's members were accused of caring 'more for the appearance and rarity of the books that they collected than for the literary contents' (p. 123). However, Husbands argues that the members did read the books they collected and they 'displayed an interest in early English literature' and 'were instrumental in preserving [...] many early works that might otherwise have perished under the weight of public indifference' (p. 125). Three of the Club's members owned private printing presses which they used to issue reprints of older texts such as Poems of Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, printed by Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges on his Lee Priory Press. One of the major criticisms of the Club, however, was 'its members' willingness to overlook differences of class and wealth' (p. 128) exemplified in the posthumous attack on one of its members, Haslewood, who was 'portrayed [...] as an illiterate, vulgar and dishonest fool who had fraudulently insinuated his way into the Roxburghe Club' (p. 127). This 'fear of the loss of social boundaries' was a nineteenth-century concern that was 'still causing disquiet' in 1863 (p. 130). Tying in with the volume's concern with materiality, Husbands' suggestion that, in a sense, the Club's 'appreciation of books as artefacts'

made them 'the intellectual forerunners of modern projects such as Google books and similar digital facsimile projects' (p. 130) emphasises the many different ways in which books can and could be appreciated.

10 The third section of the collection is entitled 'Writing Consumption' and opens with Carrie Griffin's essay 'Reconsidering the Recipe: Materiality, Narrative and Text in Later Medieval Instructional Manuscripts and Collections'. One of the aims of her study is 'a reinterpretation of how modern scholarship consumes and receives "texts" that are short, apparently formulaic, and that constitute examples of "non-literary" genres' (p. 135). Crucial to this is the definition of the term 'recipe' and a reconsideration of how recipes were consumed and of their 'contemporary manuscript contexts' (p. 136). She begins with an overview of scholarship on recipes, particularly that of Henry Hargreaves and Rand Schmidt, and how this has resulted in 'a lack of consistency in terms of how we deal with recipes' (p. 138). The article then discusses how modern perceptions of recipes can affect how they are viewed and argues that they 'have the potential to be more complex than simple and ought not to be fully imagined as instructional or thought completely to reflect "real life"' (p. 142). Recipes concerned not only food, but also medicine and alchemy, or instructions for dying fabric or making paper; they could also be performative – which was certainly the case for charms, which Griffin notes is a category closely related to recipes. The second part of the article deals with some recipe examples in manuscripts. For instance, she analyses a recipe for 'clear eyes' which begins 'In Hoote Somere' and which, written in verse, 'has a lyrical quality which elevates it above the level of the strictly informative', suggesting that it may have been intended to 'delight as well as instruct' the audience (p. 144). In considering another manuscript, the *Treatise on Rosemary*, a collection of texts that includes, but is not limited to, recipes, Griffin shows how the codex's organisation helped readers to access the various texts both individually and as a collection. As such, she insists that context – and the materiality of the manuscript – is 'key to understanding how these texts and collections were consumed' and to the increasingly diverse audiences that read them (p. 148). In concluding, Griffin offers a paradigm for understanding recipes and what they can tell us 'not just about society and culture but significantly about the consumption and organisation of knowledge and information' (p. 149).

11 The woodcut for Caxton's second edition of *The Canterbury Tales* (1483) is the subject of Anamaria Gellert's contribution, 'Fools, "Folye" and Caxton's Woodcut of the Pilgrims at Table'. Amongst the pilgrims seated around the table is the 'unexpected figure of a fool with his traditional ass's ears and coxcomb' (p. 150). Gellert notes that since 'Chaucer did not explicitly include a fool [...] in the General Prologue, the explanation for the fool's presence must be sought elsewhere' (p. 153). To do so, Gellert examines the way the words 'fool' and 'folye' are used in *The Canterbury Tales* and aims to 'reconstruct the medieval concept of folly as it emerges from the religious, medical and literary discourses that formed the cultural context of the poet's work' (p. 153). She thus first examines the definition of 'fool' and the representation of fools and folly in artistic and textual sources and notes how there was a 'medieval tendency to interpret folly in a moralising key by associating it with sin, and in particular with lust' (p. 158). In the following sections she considers folly in a number of the *Tales* and notes that this 'moralising function' can be observed in the religious- tract-like *Parson's Tale* (p. 159). In the *Tale of Melibee* 'the words "fool" and "folye"/ "folie" occur mainly in connection with the concepts of prudence and wisdom' (p. 161) whereas in the *Knight's Tale* 'they

are used to indicate the melancholy lovers Arcite and Palamon' (p. 162) since '[t]he folly of love is a recurrent theme in medieval romance' (p. 163). These three tales thus provided 'a rich quarry of religious, medical and literary reflections on different forms of folly which Caxton may have drawn on if it was he who commissioned the [woodcut]' (p. 164). The final section of Gellert's article considers some visual precedents for the fool such as the engravings by Master E.S. and the Housebook Master and concludes with a reading of Caxton's woodcut. She contends that 'the woodcut [...] is a deliberate act of subversion in that it reaffirms the power of collective laughter, as well as the function of the fool as truth-teller' (p. 167), opening up a 'new space of interpretation' (p. 168). The question remains as to who was responsible for the inclusion of the woodcut but even if this is not answerable, Gellert's essay does suggest a number of cultural references which a contemporary reader could have brought to this woodcut's incongruous figure.

12 Chaucer and the theme of being 'at table' continues in John Block Friedman's article 'Anxieties at Table: Food and Drink in Chaucer's Fabliaux Tales and Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Der Ring*'. The author's aim is 'to explore the way food- and drink-conveyed class anxieties are used as plot devices to trigger dramatic action' in these two poets since, although he notes that this is a theme that could be explored in other works, 'there are so many striking similarities in their treatment of "festive" rustic or villager food and drink as to suggest that one poet knew the work of the other' (p. 169-170). The author first explores upper-class anxieties about the lower classes and their often excessive relationship to food and drink and then examines how food and drink are 'woven into the dramatic structure of the *Tales*' giving examples of how the drunken Miller interrupts the end of the *Knight's Tale* and how the 'seemingly drunker pilgrims, the Friar and the Summoner', interrupt the Wife of Bath (p. 173-174). He then moves on to consider Wittenwiler's text, 'an anti-peasant satire of 9699 lines' contemporary to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (p. 175-176). *Der Ring* involves a peasant banquet which 'serves to illustrate middle- and upper-class views of the dietary habits of peasants' (p. 177). The final section brings the work of the two poets together examining some of the parallels in the works, such as lovers falling through or from a roof (Bertschi in *Der Ring* and John in the *Miller's Tale*) and the kissing of bottoms instead of faces (also in the *Miller's Tale*). Although the argument seems a little disjointed at times, the author entertains the interesting possibility that Chaucer and Wittenwiler knew each other's work, if not directly (which is difficult to prove), then 'intertextually' through the circulation of 'narrative elements' and 'cultural hearsay' (p. 186).

13 Mary Morse's article 'Alongside St Margaret: The Childbirth Cult of Saints Quiricus and Julitta in Late Medieval English Manuscripts' looks at the way these two martyr saints were invoked as protectors of women in childbirth in England. They appear in a prayer extant on 'six fifteenth-century English prayer rolls that may have function as birth girdles' and which show evidence of 'consumer consumption' in that they were rubbed and touched, perhaps being placed on the labouring woman's abdomen (p. 187). Morse examines the historical context of the two saints in England including church dedications and suggests that their cult may have been imported through the crusades. She notes, however, that there is no specific childbirth cult linked to them. The article takes each of the extant rolls in turn and analyses the references to the mother-son pair and considers the broader potential meaning of prayers to the Five Wounds and the crucified Christ also on the rolls in the context of childbirth including the

transformation of physical agony into joy. Although some of these prayer rolls and interpretations have previously been discussed in the literature, it is useful to bring them all together in one place, and the reference to forthcoming work on two further possible sources in the postscript should prove interesting.

14 The final article in the collection, 'Consuming the Text: Pulephilia in Fifteenth-Century French Debate Poetry' by Emma Cayley, takes as its starting point the phrase 'avoir/ mettre la puce en l'oreille'. This phrase 'points both to disquiet and to unsatisfied sexual desire' – initially, she later notes, in relation to women – and 'figures the irresolution of the debate poem' (p. 207). This irresolution, she suggests, 'generat[es] further writing' and means that the debate poem 'does not stand alone, but interacts with a community of others' including in the manuscript context (p. 208). After tracing examples of the flea tradition in medieval literature, she considers how 'the longed-for "consumption" of the beloved' is articulated in Guillaume Alexis' *Debat de l'omme mondain* and Alain Chartier's *Debat Reveille Matin* (p. 214). The *Debat Reveille Matin*, she notes, 'derives its premise from a proverb [...]: "Ami pour l'aultre veille" (A friend stays up for another)' and Cayley suggests that the sense of loyalty to one's friends that this implies leaves the female protagonists/voices in the poem elided: in the sense of Kokosfky-Sedgwick's 'traffic in women', the woman's absence reinforces homosocial bonds (p. 215). In a nuanced argument, she goes on to propose that 'there is a strong thematic and linguistic connection' between this expression and 'avoir la puce en l'oreille', which also occurs in the two poems, especially in the way *oreille* and *(r)(é)veille* are often rhymed (p. 217). A 'slippage' between the two phrases 'may lead us to read these friendships between male interlocutors [...] as erotically charged' (p. 217). In concluding she notes that 'it is male desire that is ultimately satisfied through verbal intercourse with men in the absence of the female speaker' (p. 221). Male speakers in debate poetry, eliding the female subject, can 'adopt[...] a feminised position' which makes the erotic expression 'avoir la puce en l'oreille' 'confused and eroded' (p. 221). The 'place of the "puce" in the text' thus becomes a 'gender-neutral' one 'haunted by the spectres of textual desire' (p. 221).

15 The range of topics covered in this book, including codicology, the book trade, literary and visual studies, patronage and gender studies, means that it not only brings new ideas to these individual fields but that it also emphasises the importance of their intersection, particularly around the themes of materiality and consumption and as such it has much to offer those working on the material culture of the late medieval and early modern period.